

22D MEU(SOC) VISITS PORTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The USS KEARSARGE left the port of Marmaris, Turkey, where your Marines and Sailors enjoyed a few days of liberty in the height of the tourist season. The Morale, Welfare and Recreation team organized several activities and tours for your loved ones to enjoy. One of the big attractions was a tour of Ephesus, an ancient Greek city founded by colonists from Athens in the 10th century B.C. Other events in Marmaris included whitewater rafting, scuba diving, and fishing trips. Your amphibious warriors also participated in a special tree-planting ceremony designed to help rebuild Turkish forests recently destroyed by wild fires. This was the first tree planting by Marines and Sailors in Turkish history and it is expected to kick off an ongoing project, where personnel from each visiting U.S. Navy ship will plant trees as a sign of friendship and support for the Turkish people.

Other ships in the Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) with embarked Marines and Sailors of the MEU(SOC) visited varying ports in the Mediterranean Sea. The USS GUNSTON-HALL enjoyed a port call in Souda Bay, Crete, taking advantage of a sports complex near the ship to enjoy softball, beach volleyball, horseshoes and basketball. On the USS PONCE, Marines and sailors of the MEU(SOC) made a stop in Rhodes, Greece, where they also conducted MWR tours to scenic and historic sites.

Now back aboard ship, Marines and Sailors of the 22d MEU(SOC) continue to train and prepare for future operations. Shipboard training across the unit has included day and night live-fire events, class room training on weapons and tactics, physical training, and a continued focus on flight operations.

I am very proud of the performance and conduct of our Marines and Sailors thus far. Most impressively, is how your Marines and Sailors continue to represent themselves, their unit, their country and you in each part of the world in which we have visited. You should be proud too.

KEEPING INFORMED

I remind you that this web site will continue to serve as your best source of information on 22d MEU(SOC) activities. It will be updated regularly with stories and photographs of your Marines and Sailors.

You can also access our 24-hour hotline by calling 1-877-817-7322 (toll-free) or 910-451-8780 (Jacksonville, N.C. area) and pressing '4' at the prompt.

All official and factual information regarding the 22d MEU(SOC)'s movements, activities, and operations will come directly from me via this web site (www.usmc.mil/22ndmeu/), the MEU hotline, or the Key Volunteer Network. Remember, other sources of information may be misleading or incorrect.

As always, we appreciate the sacrifice you make for us on a daily basis. I extend my warmest regards to you and yours. Semper Fidelis, and God bless all of you.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Stilwell
Colonel, USMC
Commanding Officer